

CHINA INTERNAL

There is still no end in sight to the slow-motion struggle that has been under way in Peking for many months. The drive by Mao Tse-tung and Lin Piao to unseat opponents has stalled, and signs are mounting that opposing forces are digging in for a winter of political trench-warfare.

Regime pronouncements on the cultural revolution and press attention to Lin Piao have fallen off in the past two weeks. Lin Piao missed the last Red Guard rally, on 11 November, possibly for reasons of health. He has a long history of frail health, probably the aftermath of a serious wound and tuberculosis. Until August this year, when he became Mao's number two man, he rarely made public appearances. If he has been forced to reduce his activities, this might give his opponents an opportunity to improve their position at his expense.

Red Guards have come in for considerable criticism lately and their political activities have been sharply curtailed. The Guards have been the instrument of Mao and Lin for carrying out the drive against opponents in the party.

Numerous wall posters have been appearing in Peking charging that Guards have killed and even tortured to death party officials in many Chinese cities. On 20 November the Peking city party committee posted notices warning that Red Guards who set up kangaroo courts and tortured officials

25X6 would be severely punished. On 18 November Foreign Minister Chen Yi told [REDACTED] that Red Guards had sometimes been childish and that some of their attacks on party officials had been mistaken. It is unlikely that he would talk this candidly to a foreigner unless it was now safe to do so.

On 16 November Peking issued a directive ordering Red Guards throughout the nation to wind up their political activities by 20 November and go home. This has not been officially publicized but we know about it [REDACTED] 25X1C

Although poster attacks against Mao's former deputy, Liu Shao-chi, and party general secretary Teng Hsiao-ping continue to be seen by foreign correspondents in Peking, no new moves against them have been taken recently. They have been in disfavor since August.

The positions of two leaders identified with a relatively moderate line in Peking--Premier Chou En-lai and economic planner Li Fu-chun--has been enhanced since about 10 November. Chou En-lai gave speeches on 12 and 15 November--his first since 30 September. On 10 November Peoples Daily published an editorial aimed at curbing Red Guard interference with production. This is a moderate line that has been taken by Chou, but not by Lin Biao or Mao. This editorial is the only authoritative regime pronouncement on the cultural revolution issued since early November.

On 16 November the same day Red Guards were ordered home, Peking revealed that Li Fu-chun, whose career has been identified with Chou, is now a member of the elite Standing Committee of the Politburo. Aside from Mao and Lin, men explicitly identified as members include Chou, cultural revolution officials Chen Po-ta and Kang Sheng, propaganda chief Tao Chu, and now Li Fu-chun.

Chou En-lai has survived an apparent attempt to put pressure on him through attacks on officials and ministries in the government machinery he heads. These attacks, through Red Guard posters and demonstrations, began about 20 October and ended abruptly about 8 November. They were obviously officially instigated and were explicitly sanctioned by Lin Piao in his last speech on 3 November.

Regime pronouncements in that period attacked fence sitters and would-be compromisers--terms that seemed to apply to Chou. Taken together, these developments suggested that Lin and Mao were trying to put pressure on Chou and other government officials to back them more firmly in their fight against enemies in the regular party machinery. They evidently have not been very successful, however, and the attempt to apply pressure can only have served sharpening differences which have been developing in the leadership.

The Consul General in Hong Kong has sent in an analysis

...an idea along with which he would be inclined to agree (Source BR 2592 21 Nov 66). He says that while it is tempting to assume that Mao's opponents have prevailed, he would caution himself to waiting then this last round on points. He says it is unclear whether Mao has undertaken a political retreat or was forced by his opponents into announcing at least a temporary slowdown. But he says a retreat, however temporary, can hardly be pleasing to Mao.